WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An electronic still camera comprising:

a plurality of detection means provided respectively at different positions, for detecting contact or approach of a hand to make an image pickup operation;

mode setup means for setting a stand-by mode in which a predetermined power and/or driving pulse is supplied to an image pickup device, capable of commencing an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

image pickup control means for executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup means and all the plurality of detection means detect the contact or approach.

2. A camera according to claim 1, further comprising mode holding means using a non-volatile memory, for holding a setup state of the stand-by mode set by the mode setup means even during a power-off period.

3. A camera according to claim 1, further comprising mode release means for releasing the stand-by mode when the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup means and a period in which at least one of the plurality of detection means does not detect the contact or approach reaches a predetermined time.

4. A camera according to claim 1, further comprising operation control means for rendering a part of the plurality of detection means operational, when the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup means and a period in which at least one of the plurality of detection means does not detect the contact or approach reaches a predetermined time.

5. A camera according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of detection means are provided at least at a grip part and a release button part of a camera body.

6. A camera according to claim 1, wherein the preliminary operation includes at least automatic exposure, automatic focus adjustment, and automatic white balance adjustment.

7. An electronic still camera comprising:

detection means provided near a release button, for detecting contact or approach of a hand to make an image pickup operation;

a main power switch for switching on and off a power source of the camera; and

image pickup control means for executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if the power switch is set on and the detection means detects the contact or approach.

8. A camera according to claim 1 [illegible], wherein the preliminary operation includes at least electric conducting to an image pickup device.

9. An electronic still camera comprising:

a plurality of detection means provided respectively at different positions, for detecting contact or approach of a hand;

mode setup means for setting a stand-by mode in which a predetermined power and/or driving pulse is supplied to an image pickup device, capable of commencing an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

image pickup control means for executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup means and at least one of the plurality of detection means detects the contact or approach.

10. A method for controlling an electronic still camera, comprising steps of:

detecting contact or approach of a hand to a camera body, by a plurality of detection means provided respectively at different positions;

bringing an image pickup system including at least an image pickup device into a stand-by state in which the image pickup system commences an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if the image pickup system is in the stand-by state and at least one of the plurality of detection means

detects the contact or approach of the hand.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the preliminary operation is executed if all the plurality of detection means detect the contact or approach.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein in the step of detecting, if the image pickup system is in the stand-by state and a part of the plurality of detection means detects the contact or approach of the hand to make an image pickup operation, another part of the plurality of detection means starts a detection operation.

13. A method according to claim 10, wherein the plurality of detection means are provided at least at a grip part and a release button part of a camera body.

14. A method according to claim 10, further comprising a step of writing a setup of the image pickup system in the stand-by state into a non-volatile memory if an input for turning off a power source is given.

15. A method according to claim 10, further comprising a step of releasing the stand-by state when the stand-by state is set and a period in which at least one of the plurality of detection means does not detect the contact or approach of the hand reaches a predetermined time.

16. A method according to claim 10, wherein the preliminary operation includes at least automatic

exposure, automatic focus adjustment, and automatic white balance adjustment.

17. A method according to claim 10, wherein the preliminary operation includes at least electric conducting to the image pickup device.

18. A method for controlling an electronic still camera, comprising steps of:

detecting contact or approach of a hand by detection means provided near a release button;

switching on and off a main power source of the camera; and

executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if the main power source is on and the plurality of detection means detects the contact or approach of the hand.

19. A method according to claim 18, wherein the preliminary operation includes at least electric conducting to an image pickup device.